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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
Washington 25, D. C.

FIELD MEMORANDUM SCS # 1121

Re: Attendance at Meetings

June 30, 1947

TO ALL RANKING FIELD OFFICERS:

U. S. Department of Agriculture Regulation 1512 as revised March 27, 1947, (amendment 236), (1) redefines the word "meeting", (2) eliminates the former requirement that the Director of Personnel approve attendance at meetings where more than three employees from the bureau are to attend, and (3) permits bureau chiefs to delegate certain authority to approve attendance at meetings.

Your particular attention is directed to the new definition of the word "meeting", which is as follows:

"The term 'meeting,' as used in this regulation, means any meeting (other than work conferences held in connection with cooperative programs of this Department with other Federal or State agencies) called by an agency or organization other than this Department."

It is to be recognized that attendance at local meetings as well as others will require specific approval. However, the regulation is not being interpreted to include purely local gatherings of organizations such as Chamber of Commerce, civic clubs, etc., where no travel expense is involved. Conventions held by such organizations would require approval to attend on government time. An example of the type of local meetings requiring approval to attend would be the machinery demonstration meetings held from time to time by machinery companies in various localities.

Work conferences held in connection with cooperative programs of the U. S. Department of Agriculture with other Federal Departments or agencies or state agencies require no specific approval. Soil Conservation Districts would be included as a state agency.

Under the provisions of paragraph 4.b of the revised regulations, I hereby delegate the following authority:

FOR OPERATIONS PERSONNEL

(1) The head of each field office (top official at each activity location) may authorize attendance of himself and subordinates at local meetings (at his official headquarters or within his immediate work area) where attendance is in connection with his official duties providing no travel or transportation vouchers will be involved.

(2) Within his State, the State Conservationist, as well as the Regional Conservator, may authorize attendance at local meetings which are either inside or outside of an employee's work area. (Form AD-61 shall be used if any travel vouchers are involved.)

(3) The Regional Conservator may authorize attendance at any meetings which are not statewide, regional or national in character. (Form AD-61 shall be used if any travel vouchers will be involved.)

FOR RESEARCH PERSONNEL

(1) The head of each field office may authorize attendance of himself and subordinates at all local meetings (at his official headquarters or within his immediate work area) providing no travel or transportation vouchers will be involved.

(2) The Chief of Research or the Assistant Chief of Research may authorize attendance at any meetings which are not statewide, regional or national in character. (Form AD-61 shall be used if any travel vouchers will be involved.)

FOR INDIVIDUALS TRAVELING AWAY
FROM THEIR HEADQUARTERS

An individual traveling away from his headquarters may authorize his own attendance at purely local meetings occurring during the course of an official trip.

ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS WHICH REQUIRE
PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE CHIEF

Requests for authority to attend meetings shall be submitted to me on Form AD-61 for all meetings which are statewide, regional or national in character.

While there is no longer any departmental requirement that Form AD-61, "Request for Authorization to Attend Meetings", be used, we feel that it will serve our purpose as well as any other form and we will continue to use it, at least for the time being, where formal approval is required and to support any travel vouchers.

It is not considered necessary or practical to formally authorize in writing attendance at purely local meetings where no vouchers for travel or transportation expenses will be involved. Verbal approval under the delegated authority will suffice in these instances. Attendance at meetings of a national, regional or statewide character will require approval on Form AD-61 if on government time regardless of the fact there may not be any travel or transportation expense vouchers involved.

It will be necessary to keep some record of the attendance at all meetings even under verbal approval since Regulation 1512 provides:

"The Director of Personnel may from time to time request special reports of the total attendance at meetings, including local meetings."

To this end each official delegated authority to authorize attendance at local meetings in those cases where no expense vouchers and therefore no Forms AD-61 are involved, should keep with his work data a notation of the number of employees authorized by him to attend these meetings and the dates of the attendance. This information will then be available if ever required.

The Regional Budget and Finance Division will be furnished with three copies of all approved Forms AD-61, one copy to support the employee's travel voucher, if any involved, one copy to be forwarded to the Departmental Director of Personnel as a report if the meeting is regional, statewide, or national in character and more than two employees attend on government time, one copy to be filed, in all cases, in order to be available for compilation of special reports

if required. The Washington Budget and Finance Division will issue such further procedural instructions as are necessary.

This memorandum applies only to meetings called by an agency or organization other than the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. H. Bennett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "H. H." on the left and "Bennett" on the right.

